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ABSTRACT

Data concerning librarians' beliefs about possible problems associated with dual career marriages, as well as data on the educational and marital histories of librarians, were collected by a mail questionnaire distributed to a random sample of alumnae from the graduating master's classes of the School of Library and Information Studies of Texas Woman's University from 1961 to 1985. The "typical librarian," according to the data, married young and stayed married, has two children, received her professional education in her late 30s, works full-time, and finds that the only conflict between marriage and her professional and career development is the geographical limitation imposed by her spouse's job. There are no significant differences between the attitudes of single and married librarians concerning the impact of marriage on careers. (Author/KM)

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LIBRARIANS AND DUAL CAREER MARRIAGES

A STUDY OF TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY ALUMNAE

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ABSTRACT: Data concerning librarians' beliefs about possible problems associated with dual career marriages, as well as data on the educational and marital histories of librarians, were collected by a mail questionnaire distributed to alumnae of the School of Library and Information Studies of Texas Woman's University. The "typical librarian," according to the data, married young and stayed married, has two children, received her professional education in her late 30's, works full time, and finds the only conflict between profession and career development is the geographical limitation imposed by her spouse's job. There are no significant differences between the attitudes of single and married librarians concerning the impact of marriage on careers.

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Women's Interest Group of the Association for Library and Information Science Education, Chicago, IL, Jan. 16, 1986.

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The phenomenon of dual career marriages has received considerable attention in recent years in both scholarly and popular commentary.(1) A dual career marriage is one in which spouses are simultaneously employed full-time. The phenomenon is the result of changes in the status and role of women in American society, including, changes in the ways families respond to economic pressures as well as women's assertion of their rights to social equality. Dual career marriages are an important concern for librarians because many librarians are involved in such relationships and also because the popular image of the profession is so closely tied to the public perception of the kind of woman who becomes a librarian.

Information about librarians' marriages and careers shows again that the image of the librarian as spinster is incorrect, but it also shows that librarians combine marriage and profession in a pattern in which librarianship is typically a second career, coming after a "career" as wife and mother. Data on dual career marriages and librarians' views of their relationship to professional development were collected. One set of questions posed related to librarians' perceptions of the effects of marriage on professional development. The study also collected data on the marital histories of librarians, to determine how many are involved in dual career marriages.

A questionnaire was sent to a random sample of 338 persons who received Master's degrees (Master of Library Science or Master of Arts) from the School of Library and Information Studies of Texas Woman's University. Questionnaires were mailed early in December, 1985; the timing may account for a response

rate of 39 per cent--132 responses were received, of which 130 were useable. Whether these alumnae are typical of all librarians remains to be seen. The data is useful in designing professional education, because library educators need information on our graduates so we can assess what we have done and think about what we might do differently to meet students' needs.

Analysis of the data shows that respondents' have a variety of reasons for working. They indicate most strongly that they work because they enjoy the profession. Respondents were asked to rate agreement with a series of statements on a scale of 1-5, where 1 indicates "strongly agree" and 5 indicates "strongly disagree." Table 1 shows the mean response, its standard deviation, and the median response.

Table 1
Reasons for Working
(1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree)

	MEAN	S.D.	MED
You work because:			
- You enjoy your profession	1.3	.7	1
- You enjoy the company of the people you work with	1.6	.9	1
- You feel a social obligation to make a professional contribution	2.3	1.2	2
- You need the income	1.9	1.3	1
- You would be bored without a job	2.3	1.6	2

Those who are married believe their spouses are supportive of their careers. This finding is in accord with the data gathered by the American Library Association's Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship, which showed that for women re-entering the profession after a period of time off, the encouragement from spouses was the most important factor contributing to re-entering the profession.(2) They also believe themselves to be supportive of their spouses' careers--slightly more supportive, in fact, than they believe their spouses are of them. The data relating to attitudes toward spouses' careers and spouses' attitudes toward librarians careers are shown in tables 2 and 3.

Table 2
Perception of Spouse's Attitude toward Librarians' Career
(1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree)

	Mean	S.D.	Median
- Encourages you in your career because the family needs the income	2.5	1.5	2
- Encourages you in your career for other reasons	1.5	.7	1
- Has no strong or negative feelings about your career	2.4	1.4	2
- Dislikes your having a career but sees the need for a second income	4.3	1.1	5
- Dislikes your having a career and would prefer that you not work	4.4	1.0	5
- Would not mind if you earned more money than he or she does	2.2	1.4	2
- Would not mind if you were more successful in professional activities than he or she is	2.1	1.3	2
- Would not mind if you achieved a more prominent position in your organization than he or she has in his or hers	2.0	1.4	1

Table 3
Respondents´ Attitudes toward Spouse´s Career
(1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree)

	MEAN	S.D.	MEDIAN
- You encourage his/her career because the family needs the income	1.9	1.3	1
- You encourage his/her career for other reasons	1.4	.8	1
- You have no strong or negative feelings about his/her career	2.2	1.6	2
- You dislike his/her having a career but see the need for a second income	4.6	1.0	5
- You dislike his/her having a career and would prefer that she/he not work	4.7	1.0	5
- You would not mind if he/she earned more money than you do	1.2	.8	1
- You would not mind if she/he were more successful in professional activities	1.3	.8	1
- You would not mind if he/she achieved a more prominent position in his/her organization than you have in your organization	1.2	.8	1

The final set of attitudinal data was gathered by collecting information on degrees of agreement with a set of statements about the impact of marriage on librarians' careers. This data, presented in Table 4, shows no dramatic surprises. The respondents clearly do not believe that marital status influences the choice of librarianship as a profession. They do believe that the selection of a library school is limited geographically and the decision to attend part or full time is affected by their marital status, and that spousal considerations affect where they can apply for jobs. They do agree that librarianship is a good career for those who wish to step in and out of a profession. One respondent wrote a marginal note here, however, which said, "If people believe this, then that explains why librarianship is not recognized as a profession."

The only serious limitation these respondents believe that marriage imposes on career development is geographical--married people believe their choices of places to work are limited. The respondents are evenly divided on the whether a spouse's job limits one's opportunities for professional promotion (question f) and on whether short-term or long-term career planning is most important (question k).

Analysis of variance on mean responses to these statements was computed to see if there is a difference in responses between the group "never married" and all those who were married. The analysis revealed no significant differences. Single respondents have generally the same attitudes as married respondents.

Table 4
Impact of Marriage on Career Development
(1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree)

Statement	Opinion MEAN	S.D.	MED
a. Choice of librarianship as a profession is influenced by one's marital status.	4.1	1.2	5
b. Choice of a library school is limited by the geographical limitations of a spouse's job.	2.0	1.3	2
c. Deciding whether to attend school full-time or part-time is determined by a spouse's job.	2.5	1.4	2
d. Full-time study in library school is difficult for those whose spouses have full-time jobs.	3.0	1.4	3
e. Deciding where to apply for professional positions is determined by the demands of a spouse's job.	1.9	1.2	2
f. Opportunities for professional promotion are limited by the demands of a spouse's job.	2.9	1.4	3
g. Opportunites for continuing professional education are limited by the demands of a spouse's job.	3.2	1.3	4
h. Participation in professional associations is limited by the demands of a spouse's job.	3.6	1.3	4
i. Professional writing and research is limited by the demands of a spouse's job.	3.7	1.3	4
j. Librarianship is a good profession for dual-career marriages because one may leave the profession and re-enter it later.	2.3	1.2	2
k. Short-term career planning is more important than long-term career planning for people in dual-career marriages.	3.3	1.3	3

The attitudinal data collected should be read in light of data about the respondents. All but two respondents are female. Only two are married to librarians. Of the 97 married respondents, only 3 report that their spouses do not work full time, but do work part-time.

Data on age, education, and marital histories reveal that for a majority of the respondents, professional librarianship is a second career begun after marriage and child-rearing. Table 5 shows the mean ages of the respondents and their ages at receipt of bachelor's degrees and master's degrees as well as the mean age at first marriage. Table 5 shows the per cent of respondents with different types of marital histories and also shows the mean age at which each type received the master's degree. The data show clearly that those who were "ever married" received their education and began their professional career much later than those who were "never married."

Table 5
Respondents´ Age Data

AGE VARIABLE	MEAN	S.D.	MIN.	MAX.
Present age	44.5	11.3	23	73
Age at BA/BS	24.6	7.7	19	66
Age at MLS	36.4	10.2	21	67
Age, 1st marriage	22.4	3.3	17	38

Table 6
Marital History and Age at Master´s Graduation

		MASTER´S DEGREE	
MARITAL HISTORY	PER CENT	MEAN	MEDIAN
Never married	23.6	30.2	26.5
Married, once, still	57.5	37.9	40.0
Divorced	3.9	37.0	32
Separated	.8	43.0	43
Widowed	2.4	46.5	46.5
Widowed, remarried	1.6	No age data	
Divorced, remarried	7.9	36.1	35
Divorced, remarried, divorced	2.4	38.7	36

In terms of marriage and family, as shown by table 6, "Marital History," and table 7, "Ever Married, With Children" the respondents represent typical traditional women. The exception to that profile is the data on "Work History During Marriages" (Table 10), which show that a large majority of them worked full time during their marriages. Most of the respondents received their education after being married and after having their last child (tables 8 and 9)

Table 7
Ever Married, with Children

Number Of Children	Per cent
0	20.6
1	22.7
2	30.9
3	14.4
4	8.2
5	2.1
6	1.0

2 Respondents who are "Never married" report 1 child each.

Table 8
Ever Married Respondents

TIMING OF MASTER'S EDUCATION	Per Cent
Before first marriage	7.3
During first marriage	85.4
After first marriage	7.3

Table 9
Timing of Last Child

Timing of Last Child	Per cent
Before MLS	86.3
After MLS	13.7

Table 10
Work History During Marriages

Work Status	1ST MAR. Per cent	2D MAR. Per cent
Full time	64.6	85.7
Part time	11.4	0.0
Full and part time	8.3	7.1
Did not work	15.6	7.1

The data in the previous tables relating to age at marriage and age at receipt of master's degree were intriguing because such a high mean age for receipt of degree was not expected. The hypothesis that the age of master's graduates has gone up in recent years, thus weighting the mean upward, as a result of the return to school of "non-traditional" students was tested. Respondents were grouped into classes by year of year of graduation for the last 25 years. There were not enough respondents in groups prior to 1960 to make meaningful groups. Table 11 shows that the mean age at graduation has <u>not</u> changed significantly in the last 25 years.

Table 11
Age at Receipt of Master's Degree, by Class

Graduating Class	Mean age at graduation
1961-65	36.8
1966-70	33.7
1971-75	31.7
1976-80	36.0
1981-85	37.3

To further test whether age of respondents shapes attitudes, analysis of variance for the five-year class groups was computed for all the attitudinal variables listed in tables 1-4. There is no significant difference between class groups for any of these variables.

LIMITATIONS

The results of this study must be interprted in light of limitations on the sample. The sample was selected from alumnae whose current address is on file with the Texas Woman's University Alumnae Association. Recent graduates are more heavily represented than older graduates, who have had more time to disappear from alumnae office records, for various reasons: moving, death, declining interest in the University, etc. Although there is no reason to suppose that graduates of Texas Woman's University differ in attributes or attitudes from graduates of other library schools, a comparative study of alumnae of other schools in Texas and other states would be useful.

CONCLUSION

The general conclusion to be drawn from this study is that these librarians see few serious conflicts between marriage and career. Because they have "done" their marriage and family first, they went into a profession with the support of their spouses. They seem to feel spousal support is continual. They recognize the need to adapt, in terms of geography, but don't see that adaptation as inhibiting professional development. For this

group, it appears that dual career marriages do not have negative impacts on their careers. These attitudes are consistent among graduating master's classes for the last 25 years.

REFERENCES

1. cf. Paul Benjamin Wiener. "Marryin' the Librarian." American Libraries 17:1 (January 1986), 16-23.

2. American Library Association, Committee on the Status of Women. Women Librarians Re-entering the Work Force. Chicago, 1985.